

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT  
FOR THE WESTERN DISTRICT OF NORTH CAROLINA  
BRYSON CITY DIVISION  
2:09cv25**

<b>JAMES J. HOWARD, SR.,</b>	)	
	)	
<b>Plaintiff,</b>	)	
	)	
<b>Vs.</b>	)	<b>ROSEBORO</b>
	)	<b>ORDER</b>
	)	
<b>111<sup>TH</sup> UNITED STATES CONGRESS,</b>	)	
<b><i>et al.</i>,</b>	)	
	)	
<b>Defendants.</b>	)	
_____	)	

**THIS MATTER** is before the court on defendants’ Motion to Dismiss. Plaintiff is proceeding *pro se* and will be advised of his obligation to respond and the time for doing so. In accordance with Roseboro v. Garrison, 528 F.2d 309 (4th Cir. 1975), plaintiff, who is proceeding *pro se*, is cautioned that defendants have filed a Motion to Dismiss contending that this court lacks subject matter jurisdiction over his Complaint, that defendants are immune from suit, that plaintiff has failed to state a claim, and that plaintiff has failed to perfect service.

Plaintiff is advised that Rule 12(b)(1) provides for dismissal where the court lacks jurisdiction over the subject matter of the lawsuit. Lack of subject-matter jurisdiction may be raised at any time either by a litigant or the court. Mansfield, C. & L.M.R. Co. v. Swan, 111 U.S. 379, 382 (1884). The ability of the court to

independently address subject-matter jurisdiction is important to finality inasmuch as a litigant, even one who remains silent on the issue of jurisdiction, may wait until they receive an adverse judgment from a district court and raise the issue of subject-matter jurisdiction for the first time on appeal, thereby voiding the judgment. Capron v. Van Noorden, 2 Cranch 126, 127, 2 L.Ed. 229 (1804). The Federal Rules of Civil Procedure anticipate this issue and provide that “[w]hensoever it appears by suggestion of the parties or otherwise that the court lacks jurisdiction of the subject matter, the court shall dismiss the action.” Fed.R.Civ.P. 12(h)(3).

When a court considers its subject-matter jurisdiction, the burden of proof is on the plaintiff. Adams v. Bain, 697 F.2d 1213, 1219 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1982). In Richmond, Fredricksburg & Potomac R.R. Co. V. United States, 945 F.2d 765 (4<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1991) (Ervin, C.J.), the Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit held, as follows

In determining whether jurisdiction exists, the district court is to regard the pleadings' allegations as mere evidence on the issue, and may consider evidence outside the pleadings without converting the proceeding to one for summary judgment. Id.; Trentacosta v. Frontier Pacific Aircraft Indus., 813 F.2d 1553, 1558 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir.1987). The district court should apply the standard applicable to a motion for summary judgment, under which the nonmoving party must set forth specific facts beyond the pleadings to show that a genuine issue of material fact exists. Trentacosta, supra, 813 F.2d at 1559 (citing Celotex Corp. v. Catrett, 477 U.S. 317, 323-24, 106 S.Ct. 2548, 2552-53, 91 L.Ed.2d 265 (1986)). The moving party should prevail only if the material jurisdictional facts are not in dispute and the moving party is entitled to prevail as a matter of law. Trentacosta, supra, 813 F.2d at 1558. A district court order dismissing a case on the grounds that the undisputed facts establish a

lack of subject matter jurisdiction is a legal determination subject to de novo appellate review. Revene v. Charles County Comm'rs, 882 F.2d 870, 872 (4th Cir.1989); Shultz v. Dept. of the Army, 886 F.2d 1157, 1159 (9th Cir.1989).

Id., at 768-69.

Plaintiff is advised that it is his burden to show the court how it has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this action. The method for doing so is in a written “response” to defendant’s motion filed within the time allowed by this Order. A copy of such response must be sent to counsel for all other parties, and plaintiff must certify that he has made such service in a “certificate of service” indicating the manner in which such service was made.

Defendant has also moved to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(5). Where a motion to dismiss is filed based on insufficient process or insufficient service of process, affidavits and other materials outside the pleadings may be properly submitted and considered.

[T]he party on whose behalf service is made has the burden of establishing its validity when challenged; to do so, he must demonstrate that the procedure employed satisfied the requirements of the relevant portions of Rule 4 and any other applicable provision of law.

Light v. Wolf, 816 F.2d 746, 751 (D.C.Cir.1987) (internal quotations omitted). Where the procedural requirements of sufficient process and service of process are not satisfied, a court lacks power to assert personal jurisdiction over a defendant. Gorman

v. Ameritrade Holding Corp., 293 F.3d 506, 514 (D.C.Cir.2002). Inasmuch as the sufficiency of process and service of process concern the court's jurisdiction, consideration of materials outside the pleadings, such as affidavits, is appropriate. Dimet Proprietary, Limited v. Industrial Metal Protectives, 109 F.Supp. 472 (D. Del. 1952). In responding to this motion, plaintiff may submit written arguments and any evidence he may have which he believes indicates that these defendants were properly served. This is not a time for arguments concerning facts of the case, only arguments and evidence that concern how plaintiff served these defendants with summonses and complaints and how such service satisfies the service requirements of Rule 4, Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

Defendants have moved to dismiss under Rule 12(b)(6), which provides for dismissal where a party has failed to state a cause of action as a matter of law. This language means that in responding to the motion to dismiss, plaintiff must show that he has made sufficient allegations to support a cause of action against such defendants that is recognized by law. Dismissal of a complaint is proper under Rule 12(b)(6) where it is clear that no set of facts consistent with the allegations in the plaintiff's complaint could support the asserted claim for relief. Taubman Realty Group LLP v. Mineta, 320 F. 3d 475, 479 (4th Cir. 2003); Migdal v. Rowe Price-Fleming Intl Inc., 248 F. 3d 321, 325-36 (4th Cir. 2001). However, the Court recently held that the "no

set of facts” standard first espoused in Conley, supra, only describes the “breadth of opportunity to prove what an adequate complaint claims, not the minimum adequate pleading to govern a complaint’s survival.” Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly, 550 U.S. 544 (2007). Under Twombly, to survive Rule 12(b)(6) scrutiny, the claims must at a minimum be “plausible.” Id. While the court accepts plausible factual allegations in the complaint as true and considers those facts in the light most favorable to a plaintiff in ruling on a motion to dismiss, a court “need not accept as true unwarranted inferences, unreasonable conclusions, or arguments.” Eastern Shore Mkt.'s Inc. v. J.D.

Assoc.'s, LLP, 213 F. 3d 175, 180 (4th Cir. 2000). The presence of a few conclusory legal terms does not insulate a complaint from dismissal under Rule 12(b)(6) when the facts alleged in the complaint cannot support the legal conclusion. And although the pleading requirements of Rule 8(a) are very liberal, more detail often is required than the bald statement by plaintiff that he has a valid claim of some type against defendant. This requirement serves to prevent costly discovery on claims with no underlying factual or legal basis.

Migdal, at 326 (citations and internal quotations omitted). In addition, a court cannot “accept as true allegations that contradict matters properly subject to judicial notice or by exhibit.” Venev v. Wyche, 293 F. 3d 726, 730 (4th Cir. 2002) (citations and internal quotations omitted).

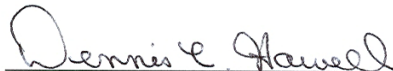
Finally, plaintiff is advised that he has up to and inclusive of May 4, 2009, to file his response with the Clerk of this court. Such response must be in writing, signed

by plaintiff or his attorney, and served on counsel for the defendants. A certificate of service must be attached to any such response indicating the manner in which service was obtained on counsel for defendant. While plaintiff has the right to represent himself, he is advised that matters in federal court can be complex and that any legal rights he has may best be protected by hiring an attorney.

**ORDER**

**IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED** that plaintiff respond to defendants' Motion to Dismiss not later than May 4, 2009.

Signed: April 20, 2009



Dennis L. Howell  
United States Magistrate Judge

